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Syllabi

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MI 728 Mission and Gender

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Syllabus

Course Description:

Study of the ways women participate in Christian mission within the contexts of their history, society and culture, Scriptural and theological traditions, and personal life. Special consideration will be given to women's issues related to mission; for instance, construction of gender identity to fit their mission, thus enabling their work. The course will be run as a seminar.

Purposes:

1. To introduce students to women's contributions in Christian mission.
2. To provide students with critical tools for discerning issues related to gender and mission.
3. To put students in touch with women, past and present, who serve as role models for doing Christian mission.
4. To provide students with opportunities for personal contact with women mission leaders and workers from North American and non-Western settings.
5. To encourage students to affirm and support women in mission.

Objectives: Upon completion of the course, students will be prepared:

1. To tell many stories of what, why and how women have done mission.
2. To articulate a theology of mission that is inclusive of women.
3. To participate in informed discussion of positions regarding the ordination of women and know how these play out in mission settings and organizations.
4. To understand styles of male and female partnership in mission.
5. To identify practical issues and gender-related pressures faced by women missionaries.
6. To speculate whether women, in the course of their ministries, have generated any new theories of mission.
7. To consider if the spirituality of women is a unique factor in mission.

Requirements:

1. Prepared participation in the seminar sessions. 15%
2. Reading of 500 pages beyond the assigned texts on a special topic* related to the course. Students will submit a signed reading log stating dates and sources read on May 17. 10%
3. Interview of one person who has served in cross cultural mission and knows firsthand the issues women missionaries deal with in that local situation. Two-page summary due by April 30. 20%
4. Participant observation of a ministry led by a woman, ideally one within a cross cultural or multicultural setting by May 17. 15%

5. Leading a 1-hour seminar presentation on a special topic* related to the course. (Note and set available date on the course schedule.)

40%

*Special topics may include (but are not limited) to:

Biographies

Women's concerns and mission responses in

Religio-cultural contexts:

Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist,

Chinese, Latino, or Traditional societies, etc.

Social contexts:

Role of women

Girl children

Marriage practices

Prostitution

Employment practices

Slavery

Women segregated in society

Women's contributions to theology of mission/ministry

Ordination of women and its implications for mission

Gender roles within mission organizations

Gender roles reconciled in mission/ministry

Styles of male/female partnership in mission

Wifely styles in ministry

Sexual harassment and abuse

Works started by women missionaries or mission groups

Bible women

Professionalization/specialization in mission

Spirituality of women

Vocations of mission – church-based, NGO-based, independent

Women's missionary movements

Class Schedule:

2/24 ***Stereotypes, stories and basic issues in our backgrounds!***

Getting acquainted with course and with one another.

VIDEO CLIP: "The Inn of the Sixth Happiness"

NOTE: Tonight you have an opportunity to observe Jill Briscoe address ATS spouses on ministry issues (Royal Auditorium).

READ: Dana Robert, *American Women in Mission*, pp. ix-xxii

Dana Robert, *Gospel Bearers, Gender Barriers*, pp. xi-28

3/3 ***Understanding mission and the idea of gender identity***

READ: Elaine Storkey, *Origins of Difference*

Dana Robert, *Gospel Bearers, Gender Barriers*, pp. 29-71

(On reserve shelf: David Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, pp.)

GUEST:

- 3/10 ***Early issues faced by American missionary women***
 READ: Dana Robert, *American Women in Mission*, pp. 1-124
 Dana Robert, *Gospel Bearers, Gender Barriers*, pp. 73-98
 GUEST:
 SEMINAR:
- 3/17 ***Women as mission leaders, female missionary organizations***
 READ: Dana Robert, *American Women in Mission*, pp. 125-316
 GUEST:
 SEMINAR
- 3/21 ***Roman Catholic sisters, lay women's leading of mission***
 READ: Dana Robert, *American Women in Mission*, pp. 317-407
 SEMINAR:
- 3/28 ***Theology and theories of women in mission***
 READ: Dana Robert, *American Women in Mission*, pp. 409-418
 (Also, Stanley Grenz and Denise M. Kjesbo, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry*.)
 GUEST:
 SEMINAR:
- 4/3 SPRING BREAK
- 4/10 ***Amy Carmichael as a case study for women's mission***
 READ: Frank L. Houghton, *Amy Carmichael of Dohnavur*
 GUEST:
 SEMINAR:
- 4/17 ***Political, social, theological, gender problems faced by women in the 20th century***
 READ: Dana Robert, *Gospel Bearers, Gender Barriers*, pp. 99-221
 SEMINAR:
- 4/24 ***Issues and opportunities for non-Western missionary women*** READ:
 SEMINAR:
- 5/1 ***Contemporary 21st century women's role in mission***
 READ:
 SEMINAR:

5/8 *Emerging questions and new perspectives on women*
SEMINAR:

5/17 *Closing class*
Submission of Research Papers and Reading Log

Pool of guests this semester:

Frances Adeney	Presbyterian, Indonesia
Kathryn Hendershot	USA
Betty Mitchell	Viet Nam
Kay Rader	Salvation Army, Korea
Howard Snyder	American Church
Sheila Stone	Hong Kong, Malaysia
Omana & Simon Varghese	Indian Pentecostal

Questions for consideration in the class:

1. What opportunities have women found to be involved in Christian mission?
2. Cite examples of women in mission who are role models for us.
3. How have women understood mission and been able to articulate their actions in terms of mission? (This would be from their framework of the Scriptures, their culture, their tradition, and their unique gifts and callings.)
4. What obstacles have women had to face, and overcome, in order to be involved in Christian mission? [Theological, cultural, historical, societal or institutional positions that needed to be challenged. Historical settings influence the obstacles.]
5. Are there any explanations of why women's roles in mission have not been viewed as prominent and important as men's roles? How do issues of clericalism, patriarchy, chauvenism and/or gender hierarchy play into the practice of Christian mission?
6. What responses have women made as they have attempted to find their place as missionaries? [Individual or movement actions related to biblical feminism, social role or stratification, valuing of the laity and/or the inclusion of women in ordination, for example.]
7. Where have women made great changes or contributions to the way Christian mission is done?
8. [Speculative: What elements are essential (if any) when women construct

their identity in mission? And, are these also the elements able to sustain them within their mission work as they experience pressures from men, institutions, cultures, and/or community's values and expectations for them? Is gender identity construction even necessary today...and if it is, in what circumstances?]